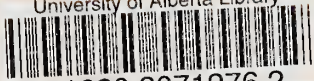


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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

HEINRICH HEINE ALS RITTER

DES

HEILIGEN GEISTES

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

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BY

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DES
HEILIGEN GEISTES

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PREFACE

The following study is intended to show Heinrich Heine's revolutionary tendencies in the literary, social, religious and political spheres. The text used was Gustav Karpeles' edition of Heinrich Heine's Gesammelte Werke. References in the footnotes are to volumes (in Roman numerals) and pages, e.g., III - p. 15, refers to page 15 in volume III.

BACKGROUND

I BACKGROUND

1. Political Background: France

Heine gives an evaluation of the different periods of French History in the Anhang zu Lutetia:

"Unter dem alten Regime galt nur die Geburt, nur die Ahnenzahl gab Ansehen, und die Ehre war eine Frucht des Stammbaums. Unter der Republik gelangte die Tugend zur Herrschaft, die Armut war eine Wuerte, und, wie vor Angst, so auch vor Scham verkroch sich das Geld. Zur Zeit des Kaisertums florierte nur der militaerische Ruhm, eine neue Ehre ward gestiftet, die Ehrenlegion --- Waehrend der Restauration intrigierte der Reichtum gegen die Gespenster des alten Regimes, die wieder ans Ruder gekommen und deren Insolenz taeglich wuchs; das beleidigte ehrgeizige Geld wurde Demagoge, liebaeugelte herablassend mit den Kurzjacken, und als die Juliussonne die Gemueter erhitzte, ward der Adelkoenig Karl X vom Throne herabgeschmissen. Der Buergerkoenig Ludwig Philipp stieg hinauf, er, der Repraesentant des Geldes, das herrscht."(1)

During the Old Regime in France several causes of discontent among the people, led to the Revolution. Unequal taxation was one of them. Another was the existence of the privileged classes. The clergy paid no taxes and the higher clergy lived like princes. The nobles enforced feudal dues, hunting rights, and claimed high positions in church and state. In an attempt to save France from bankrupcy Louis XVI called the Estates General in 1789, the Third Estate forming

(1) Anhang zu Lutetia, VI - p. 436.

the National Assembly, which instituted several important reforms: all privileges were abolished, all traces of feudalism were swept away, church tithes and feudal dues were abolished, no class was to be exempt from taxation, the "Rights of Man" was drawn up, which proclaimed the equality of all men, the sovereignty of the people, the impartial nature of the law.

The First French Republic was founded in 1792. The king was tried and executed and war was declared on England. Soon there followed the excesses of the Reign of Terror which made the French Revolution so odious to the clergy and aristocracy of Europe. A constitution was drawn up which vested all executive powers in the hands of the Directory of five, chosen by the two houses.

Napoleon's meteoric rise was due to his great intellectual ability, his unrivaled military genius, and the weakness of the European states. He overthrew the Directory and replaced it by a government of three consuls, making himself the first consul of France. In 1804 he proclaimed himself Emperor and had reached, by 1808-1812, the zenith of his power, ruling over all of Europe with the exception of England and Russia. To conquer Russia he set out in 1812 with an army of

400,000; arrived at Moscow with a force of 100,000; and when he found Moscow in flames retreated, arriving in Poland with a remnant of 20,000 soldiers. He was defeated at Leipzig in 1813 and again at Waterloo in 1815. During his reign he had built a tremendous number of public works, had re-organized the educational system, had re-established France's financial system, had restored prosperity, and had created a new nobility.

The Restoration brought Louis XVIII to the throne. He upheld the achievements of the Revolution and granted his people a Charter of Liberties which established the social, political and religious rights of all. His brother, the Count of Artois, who had been a former leader of the emigrant nobles, succeeded him as Charles X. He was very reactionary, and after much conflict was deposed during the July Revolution of 1830.

Louis Philippe, who succeeded Charles X, opposed reform, and did all he could to keep Parliament from advocating any changes demanded by the progressive parties. The socialist writers and the republicans incited the mob to attack the Tuileries, forcing the king to flee the country. A provisional government was set up in 1848 and France proclaimed a Second Republic.

The new constitution decreed that the president of the republic should be chosen by the people at large. The first president of the new republic was Louis Napoleon, who in 1852 established the Second Empire by taking the title Napoleon III.

2. Political Background: Germany.

Germany could look back with pride to the glorious period under Frederick the Great (1763-1786), the absolute monarch of Enlightenment, whose surpassing strategic ability in war and magic inspiration of a born leader of men established a sense of German unity. He did not believe in the political education of his people, but at the same time revised the administration of justice and proclaimed religious tolerance and freedom of speech. From this height Germany gradually descended to lower levels under succeeding rulers. Germany lost to Napoleon by a series of treaties a great deal of its territory. Prussia during the years 1786-1801 was humiliated, isolated and decimated. The degradation of Germany became complete during the years 1801-1808. By the Treaty of Luneville, 1801, all German lands on the left bank of the Rhine were lost to France. By the Indemnity Congress at Ratisbonn (1802-1803) France gained the Rhine boundary. Of fifty-two important cities forty-six lost their independence, and at the Battle of Jena, 1806, Germany was completely defeated, the 'Rheinbund' under the protectorship of Napoleon was created, and the Holy Roman Empire dissolved. In 1807 Germany lost by the Treaty of Tilsit all territory east of the Elbe. These were

years of complete national humiliation, but at the same time years of glorious literary activity under Goethe, Schiller, Jean Paul, ^{Kleist} Tieck and Holderlin. In 1808 Fichte wrote his patriotic Reden an die deutsche Nation: the regeneration of Germany (1808-1813) was in the process of becoming a reality. Napoleon was at the height of his power in 1811. Then followed Moscow, Leipzig and Waterloo. The period 1815-1848 was a period of reaction and of the formation of the German Confederation. Thirty-eight states joined the 'Deutscher Bund' in 1815. The Holy Alliance was formed to preserve peace in Europe, to that end holding meetings, at which the common welfare of the nations was to be discussed. In reality it served to check the political development of Germany for fifty years. The 'Bundestag' held its first meeting in Frankfurt in 1816, where one-sixth of the population could out-vote the rest. The 'Wartburgfest' (1817) and the assassination of Kotzebue strengthened the policy of oppressive conservatism. In 1819 at Karlsbad Metternich and Prussia attacked freedom of the press and put the universities under close state supervision and constant vigilance. Representative government was discussed everywhere during 1819 and 1820. Several meetings were held at Wien, but the granting of a state constitution was opposed. The

French Revolution of 1830 brought the granting of the constitution to the fore again. Several attempts were made to bring this about, at the 'Hambacher Fest' in 1832 and the 'Frankfurter Putsch'; but both failed. The press was watched more carefully and censorship was enforced beyond the bounds of reason.

In this period falls the legislation of the 'Bundestag' concerning Heine (1835) and Heine's letter protesting it (1836). The first railroads were built between Nurnberg and Fuerth (1835) and between Dresden and Leipzig (1837). Poets began to travel and to write about their travels. The Jews were emancipated from the ghettos.

Der Beschluss des Bundestages vom

10 ten D~~e~~xember 1835.

Nachdem sich in Deutschland in neuerer Zeit, und zuletzt unter der Benennung "das junge Deutschland" oder "die junge Literatur", eine literarische Schule gebildet hat, deren Bemuehungen unverholen dahin gehen, in belletristischen fuer alle Classen von Lesern zugaenglichen Schriften die christliche Religion auf die frechste Weise anzugreifen, die bestehenden socialen Verhaeltnisse herabzuwuerdigen und alle Zucht und Sittlichkeit zu zerstoeren; so hat die deutsche Bundesversammlung - in Erwaegung, dass es dringend nothwendig sey, diesen verderblichen, die Grundpfeiler aller gesetzlichen Ordnung untergrabenden Bestrebungen durch Zusammenwirken aller Bundesregierungen sofort Einhalt zu thun, und unbeschadet weiterer vom Bunde oder von den einzelnen Regierungen zur Erreichung des Zweckes nach Umstaenden zu ergreifenden Massregeln - sich zu nachstehenden Bestimmungen vereinigt:

1. Saemmtliche deutschen Regierungen uebernehmen die Verpflichtung, gegen die Verfasser, Verleger, Drucker und Verbreiter der Schriften aus der unter der Bezeichnung "das junge Deutschland" oder "die junge Literatur" bekannten literarischen Schule, zu welcher namentlich Heinr. Heine, Carl Gutzkow, Heinr. Laube, Rudolph Wienbarg und Theodor Mundt gehoeren, die Straf - und Polizei - Gesetze ihres Landes, so wie die gegen den Missbrauch der Presse bestehenden Vorschriften, nach ihrer vollen strengem in Anwendung zu bringen, auch die Verbreitung dieser Schriften, sey es durch den Buchhandel, durch Leibliotheken oder auf sonstige Weise, mit allen ihnen gesetzlich zu Gebot stehenden Mitteln zu verhindern.

2. Die Buchhaendler werden hinsichtlich des Verlages und Betriebs der oben erwaehten Schriften durch die Regierungen in angemessener Weise verwahrt und es wird ihnen gegenwaertig gehalten werden, wie sehr es in ihrem wohlverstandenen eigenen Interesse liege, die Massregeln der Regierungen gegen die zerstoerende Tendenz jener literarischen Erzeugnisse auch ihrer Seits, mit Ruecksicht auf den von ihnen in Anspruch genommenen Schutz des Bundes, wirksam zu unterstuetzen.

3. Die Regierung der freien Stadt Hamburg wird aufgefordert in dieser Beziehung insbesondere der Hoffmann - und Campe'schen Buchhandlung zu Hamburg, welche vorzugsweise Schriften obiger Art in Verlag und Vertrieb hat, die geeignete Verwarnung zugehn zu lassen.

Heine's letter to the Bundestag of January 28, 1836 was a reply to this decree.

"Mit tiefer Betruebnis erfuehlt mich der Beschluss, den Sie in ihrer 31. Sitzung von 1835 gefasst haben. Ich gestehe Ihnen, meine Herren, zu dieser Betruebnis gesellt sich auch die hoechste Verwunderung. Sie haben mich angeklagt, gerichtet und verurteilt, ohne dass Sie mich weder muendlich, noch schriftlich vernommen, ohne dass Jemand mit meiner Verteidigung beauftragt worden, ohne dass irgend eine Ladung an mich ergangen. So handelte nicht in aehnlichen Faellen das heilige Roemische Reich, an dessen Stelle der deutsche Bund getreten ist, Doktor Martin Luther glorreichen

Andenkens durfte, versehen mit freiem Geleite, vor dem Reichstag erscheinen und sich frei und oeffentlich gegen alle Anklagen verteidigen. Fern ist von mir die Anmassung, mich mit dem hochteurem Mann zu vergleichen, der uns die Denkfreiheit in religioesen Dingen erkaempft; aber der Schueller beruft sich gern auf das Beispiel des Meisters. Wenn Sie, meine Herren, mir nicht freies Geleit bewilligen wollen, mich vor Ihnen in Person zu verteidigen, so bewilligen Sie mir wenigstens freies Wort in der deutschen Druckwelt und nehmen Sie das Interdikt zurueck, welches Sie gegen Alles, was ich schreibe, verhaengt haben. Diese Worte sind keine Protestation, sondern nur eine Bitte. Wenn ich mich gegen etwas verwahre, so ist es allenfalls gegen die Meinung des Publikums, welches mein erzwungenes Stillschweigen fuer ein Eingestaendniss strafwuerdiger Tendenzen oder gar fuer ein Verleugnen meiner Schriften ansehen koennte. Sobald mir das freie Wort vergoennt ist, hoffe ich buendigst zu erweisen, dass meine Schriften nicht aus irreligioeser und unmoralischer Laune, sondern aus einer wahrhaft religioesen und moralischen Synthese hervorgegangen sind, einer Synthese, welcher nicht blos eine neue literarische Schule, benamset DAS JUNGE DEUTSCHLAND, sondern unsere gefeiertesten Schriftsteller, sowohl Dichter als Philosophen, seit langer Zeit gehuldigt haben. Wie aber auch, meine Herren, Ihre Entscheidung ueber meine Bitte ausfalle, so seien Sie doch ueberzeugt, dass ich immer den Gesetzen des Vaterlandes gehorchen werde. Der Zufall, dass ich mich ausser dem Bereich Ihrer Macht befinde, wird mich nie verleiten, die Sprache des Haders zu fuehren; ich ehre in Ihnen die hoechste Autoritaeten einer geliebten Heimat. Die persoenliche Sicherheit, die mir der Aufenthalt im Auslande gewaehrt, erlaubt mir gluecklicherweise, meine Herren, in geziemender Untertaenigkeit die Versicherung meiner tiefsten Ehrfurcht darzubringen.

Paris, Citè Bergère Nr. 3, den 28 Januar 1836.

Heinrich Heine,

beider Rechte Doktor.

The popular struggle for constitutional liberty

and national unity falls within the years 1848 and 1863. When William IV came to the throne, the great expectancy of the German people was doomed to great disappointment. William IV was an idealist in an age of realism. He abhorred the sovereignty of the people, believed in patriarchal government, and believed that authority was vested solely in him. As a result of the French Revolution of 1848 there arose within the German states a great desire to secure constitutional government. The Diet was called together. William IV promised a constitution and made other concessions, but immediately forgot his promises. Heine denounces him in his Vorrede zu den Franzoesischen Zustaenden, (1) and warns him with the spectre of the Revolution of 1793. His warning came true the same year when in Berlin a revolution surged through the streets. As a result the Frankfurt Parliament was called, which sat for thirteen months and accomplished nothing. Finally in 1850 the long-heralded constitution was granted. William IV died in 1861, five years before Prussian-German supremacy and ten years before the establishment of the German Empire.

(1) Vorrede zu den Franzoesischen Zustaenden (1832),
VI - p. 17.

3. Literary Background.

"In der Literatur, wie in der Politik, bewegt sich alles nach dem Gesetz der Aktion und Reaktion."

- Heine.

A study of the literary background which influenced Heine, revolves around the study of Romanticism. 'Sturm und Drang' and Classicism led up to Romanticism. Classifications like these are only for the sake of convenience, since each movement grew out of, was influenced by, and sometimes existed side by side with the one which preceded it.

'Sturm und Drang' was largely a reaction against the cold rationalism of the eighteenth century. The group of young radicals which are generally classified as 'Sturm und Drang' were influenced by Rousseau's *La Nouvelle* Emile and Helioise. In form they substituted variety and daring for the current gentleness and regularity; into their subject matter they put vim and vigour. Influenced by Shakespeare, they introduced into their plays many scenes and a variety of changes of scenery which sometimes became quite confusing and bewildering. Their favourite themes were regicide, fratricide, infanticide, and ~~insanity~~. It was a movement of reaction to pedantic learning and training. The language of the 'Sturm und Drang' was characterised by forceful

explanations and frenzy. It was bombastic, used strong figures of speech and was not afraid to call a spade a spade.

Classicism revolted against these immature outbursts of a young and immature group of writers. It went to the other extreme. The writers of Classicism emphasised form, symmetry, objectivity of form and content. They presented idealistic beauty and idealised reality. Their main concern was the ideally beautiful. They interpreted classical antiquity in the terms of the eighteenth century, their 'leitmotif' being

"edle Einfalt und stille Groesse".

Romanticism was the reaction to Classicism. The political background of Romanticism is one of general pessimism and despair. Germany was internally weakened by the religious quarrels of the Reformation and by the Thirty-Years' War. In 1740 there were approximately three hundred and eighteen different German states, loosely joined together to form 'Das heilige roemische Reich deutscher Nation'. The Napoleonic era raised the hopes of the people that feudalism might end; the Wars of Liberation raised the expectations of the German people to such heights that a violent reaction was inevitable when these hopes and expectations were not

realised. Romanticism offered a pleasant escape from the harsh realities of the present. German Idealism favoured the growth of Romanticism and provided the philosophic basis. Kant proclaimed the moral law within; Fichte the omnipotence of the ego; Schleiermacher that Religion was not a matter of precept, morality, law, intellectuality, or command, but a seeing, feeling and perceiving of the infinite in one's soul; Hegel that religion, art and politics are the revelations of one absolute spirit; Schelling that neither mind nor nature is absolute, the former being invisible nature, the latter visible mind.

Romanticism is an aspect of literature, an attitude which defies definition. The following are the main characteristics of Romanticism: revolt against the coldness and aloofness of the classical forms, against the objectivity of Classicism, and against everything conventional and traditional. Since the ego became the centre of all life, the romanticists turn to the innermost workings of the human soul and examine it with subjective objectivity, thus emphasising individuality, subjectivity, feeling and emotion. Their attitude to nature was not one of objective description but of subjective interpretation of natural phenomena in terms of individual moods. The reasons for the

tendency towards mediaevalism were many. There was first of all the historical development during and after the Napoleonic Wars. To escape the degradation and national humiliation after the disastrous ^{battle} ~~war~~ of Jena 1806-1807, the middle ages were glorified and idealised. From a distance the Golden Age of mediaeval times offered a spectacle of pomp and glory. The result was a revival of interest in mediaeval literature. Walter von der Vogelweide, Wolfram von Eschenbach, Dante and Chaucer influenced greatly the literature of the romantic period. In the wealth, ritualistic splendour and Gothic architecture of the Roman Catholic Church the emotionalists found a mine of inspiration and aesthetic satisfaction. It is a strange paradox that the extreme subjective individualists bowed to the commands of an autocratic church organisation. Another outstanding characteristic of German Romanticism is the expression of nationalism and patriotism which was largely due to Napoleon's attempt to establish a united Europe under his personal rule. The literary works of England, France, Spain and the Orient were translated. Schlegel and the Grimm brothers made invaluable contributions to philology. Schlegel and Tieck translated Sakespeare. The blue flower ('Die blaue Blume') became the symbol of the human mind to discover

the unattainable harmony between the 'ego' and the 'non-ego', of the return to nature from whence all things come. The formulae used by the Romanticists were such untranslatable terms as 'Waldeinsamkeit', 'die mondbeglaenzte Zaubernacht', 'Nachtigallenlied', 'Liebes-und Weltschmerz'.

The influence of Romanticism on Heine is found in certain aspects which Heine took over from it, such as the preference for subjects gruesome and dreamy, orientalism, and the exaltation of the individual imagination. Intense subjectivity in the romanticists became romantic irony, and in Heine became the characteristic 'Stimmungsbrechung'. Instead of obscure mystical symbolism Heine employed plastic, sensuous reality; instead of chivalric and ecclesiastical mediaevalism, modernity.

HEINE - THE MAN

II HEINE - THE MAN.

"Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach! in meiner Brust,
Die eine will sich von der andern trennen;
Die eine haelt in derber Liebeslust
Sich an die Welt mit klammernden Organen;
Die andre hebt gewaltsam sich vom Dust
Zu den Gefilden hoher Ahnen." (1)

Faust expressed in these words the causes of unhappiness in the world. Complete harmony between the idealistic and the materialistic natures in man is never reached. Out of this struggle, however, evolves a better individual.

"Es irrt der Mensch, solang er strebt."(2)

"Ein guter Mensch in seinem dunklen Drange
Ist sich des rechten Weges wohl bewusst."(3)

Faust not only represents the individual Goethe, but also the whole human race. Heinrich Heine was one of the few people in whom this dualism was more evident and also more tragic than in others. But since we, too, are so much like Faust, we can understand, forgive, admire and even love.

(1) Goethe: Faust, Erster Teil, lines 1112-1117.

(2) ibid, line 317.

(3) ibid, lines 328-328

Heinrich Heine was born December 13, 1799, in Duesseldorf, a town which had seen many changes of government throughout its history and was destined to see many more. The year 1797 is sometimes mentioned because his parents changed the date to keep Harry out of the Prussian draft. Goethe was the giant oak of German literature at this time; G. B. Shaw was born the year Heine died --, thus Heine was a link between the old age and the new. Heine knew Lafayette who had been one of the heroes of the Revolutions in France and in America -- thus again Heine was a link between the old world and the new. In 1806 the Principality of Berg became part of Napoleon's wide domain. The Code Napoleon brought prosperity and a new conception of freedom.

As a boy Heine was more sensitive and precocious than the other boys of his age, yet led a normal and happy life. Many were the influences at work on the mind of the boy Harry. His admiration of Napoleon knew no bounds. He saw him march into Duesseldorf, more like a god than a mortal; he heard of the victories won on the battlefields of Europe; he knew of his fairness to all people irrespective of caste, colour or creed; he saw the splendid soldiers come back in rags from Russia, and listened wide-eyed and breathless, to

Monsieur le Grand, the drummer, who told tales of glory and also of immense white icefields covered with corpses. Legends, stories of ghosts and spirits, 'Sagen' and 'Maerchen', were part of the very air breathed by the inhabitants of the old cities along the Rhine. There was his reading: tales of the knight Don Quixote, of Gulliver's Travels, -- the ghost-tales and Gothic novels of the Romanticists. At Schallmeyer's feet he absorbed a liberal and rationalistic 'Weltanschauung'. In Tieck he read about the mystic 'blaue Blume', the song of the nightingales and moonlight-magic; in Fouqué about knights, fairies and wondrous spirits. To keep him in touch with the realities of life there was attendance first at the public school then at the Lyceum and finally at Vahrenkamp's Commercial School and in addition a very short-lived apprenticeship in a bank and in a grocery store at Frankfurt. But it soon became evident that Heine was not cut out for a business career -- he preferred to read and to dream, to write secretly and publish under a pseudonym the first fruits of his poetic imagination.

His family life was happy and cloudless. As is customary in Jewish families, ties of affection bound the family together. There were Charlotte, who in 1899 died as Frau von Embden; Gustav, who became a

successful editor and officer in Vienna, and Maximilian a famous physician in Petersburg. His mother, Peira (Betty) van Geldern, came from an old respected family which had seen days of splendour. She was plain, but had an attraction all her own. She was very well educated, intelligent, and due to her associations with her father, a physician, and her brother, she was mature beyond her years. She was immediately attracted to Samson Heine who came from an undistinguished and poor Jewish family. All Heinrich knew about his father's family was that his grandfather was "ein kleiner Jude mit einem grossen Bart". He was fair, had beautiful, effeminate hands, loved uniforms, women, and a good life without responsibilities. After a comparatively short courtship and against the wishes of her family, Peira married Samson. This strange union explains some of the qualities of the mental make-up of Heine.

"He had reasoning power combined with an instinct for emotion; the enjoyment of the present with keen anticipation of the future; an indescribable capacity for illusion, which sprang from his innate optimism and invariably led to confusion of issues; a shrewd ability to judge both men and circumstances, and above all, a capacity for plunging into the joys of life whilst still retaining the full vigour of ambition." (1)

His father brought him up strictly in the Jewish

(1) Valentin, Antonina: Poet in Exile, p. 10.

faith; his mother professed an indulgent Deism. As a result Heine's attitude to religion was one of almost completely indifferent tolerance. Betty Heine had great plans for her son. He was to rise to great heights under Napoleon. When Napoleon was defeated, she transferred her hopes from the sphere of political power to the sphere of the power of money. The name of the all-powerful Rothschilds was on every lip. There was also Salomon Heine, Samson Heine's brother, who had amassed a vast fortune in Hamburg.

Salomon Heine took it upon himself to look after Heinrich, and for that purpose called him in 1816 to Hamburg. Like Lamb, Heine dreamed of a literary career while drawing figures, making out bills and attending to all the monotonous requirements of the mercantile profession. In 1818 he established, with the help of his uncle, a business of his own, Harry Heine und Kompagnie, but was forced into liquidation the next year. Seeing his utter inaptitude for business, his uncle decided to start him on a career as a lawyer. Heine was glad to leave Hamburg. He had fallen in love with his cousin Amalie, who did not return his love, but instead married a rich Jewish landowner. He released his 'Weltschmerz' in Junge Leiden and Lyrisches Intermezzo. Unrequited love, the atmosphere of

hostility and arrogance which the sensitive boy felt all around him, the failure of his business venture made these years in Hamburg (1816-1819) years of heartbreak and disappointment.

Heinrich Heine's career as a university student was equally unhappy. He went to Bonn in 1819. There he attended the lectures of the great German patriot, Ernst Moritz Arndt, and the exponent of German Romanticism, August Wilhelm Baron von Schlegel. Schlegel criticised Heine's poetic attempts, suggested rigid poetic exercises, encouraged him at all times and made him a disciple of Romanticism. Why Heine left Bonn is not known. Goettingen had a famous law faculty, discipline was much stricter than at Bonn and there were also very few distractions. But the intellectual life at Goettingen, ruled by the Hanoverian aristocracy, was narrow, stilted and nationalistic. Libertinism and licentiousness were the order of the day. Venereal diseases were accepted by the student body as the natural order of things. Heine became involved in a duel, and as a consequence he received on January 21, 1821, his 'consilium abeundi'. A month later we find him attending the University of Berlin, partly because it was the fashionable thing to do, partly because the lectures of Hegel were attracting many of the more

serious students.

To all three universities Heine had gone with the intention of studying Law, but it was the lectures in German philosophy, literature and history which he attended. He was influenced by the four great spiritual movements of the day, -- Romanticism, Hegelianism, Goethe-cult, and Teutonism -- but realising their one-sidedness he became their critic. When he went to Bonn he had not yet reached intellectual maturity, when he left Goettingen his youth definitely had ended. Grief, ill health, bitterness and cynicism had been his faithful attendants and never were to leave his side again. Fame came to him after he had published some of his poems in 1821 in Berlin. With fame came social recognition. He was accepted in the brilliant salons of Henriette Herz, Rahel von Varnhagen ~~and Rahel Levin~~, where the German Byron met such literary luminaries as Chamisso, Fouqué, Hoffmann, Alexis and others. At Bonn and at Goettingen Heine had experienced some persecution because he belonged to that hated group of Yahweh worshippers. He never could get over the fact that he was a member of the "hunted" race. The result of Heine's stay in Berlin was the awakening of a social conscience. He tried to throw himself into his work, but his chronic headaches, which were to cause so much suffering,

prevented this. Near the sea he tried to find relief and recuperation. He never had seen the sea before, found it a comforter and a healer, fell in love with it, and in gratitude immortalised the sea in his Nordsee-cycles, being the first German poet to find the sea a worthy subject of poetry.

In the fall of 1823 he returned to Hamburg and to renewed controversies with his uncle, who presented to Heine the ultimatum either to finish his law studies or to get along without any financial assistance. During the summer holidays of 1823 he made the famous Harzreise. He visited Boerne in Frankfurt and Goethe in Weimar. Heine in his later life never mentioned this visit to the great Olympian in Weimar, which was a dismal failure.

Heine worked hard at Law and in 1834 passed his examinations becoming a Doctor of Law. Before leaving Goettingen he was baptised in a Lutheran church near Goettingen on June 28, 1825, taking the name Christian Johann ^{Heinrich} Heine. It was an act not of conviction, but of expediency, because as a Jew he would have been unable to get an official position in Prussia. He always regretted the taking of this step, because Christians did not accept him, and Jews despised him.

In Norderney near the sea he tried to forget the manifold discords of his soul. When he returned to Hamburg there was only one thought in his mind -- he wanted to be a poet, and a liberator, a leader of the liberal opposition. His relatives did not understand him and showed nothing but hostility. Campe, a publisher from Hamburg, who sensed the news value and the potentialities of the Reisebilder, became henceforth his regular publisher. When the Reisebilder appeared the volume caused a sensation. The apotheosis of Napoleon was not acceptable to the reactionary policies of the government, much less Heine's enthusiasm for the principles of the Revolution of 1789. The book was promptly banned in Austria and most of the German states. Heine had foreseen the opposition that would result and decided that it would be best to leave Germany for a while.

In April 1827 Heine set out for England, the land of liberty. Through all his writings from now on runs his intensely passionate and unreasonable dislike of England. It was the English who had banned Napoleon, who were directly responsible for his downfall. Perhaps, too, London was too much like Hamburg, which for reasons of his own, he disliked so intensely. To him, the Romantic poet, English life seemed too mechanical,

materialistic, colourless and monotonous. But he was impressed by the developed political life of the Parliament. For hours he listened to the debates in the House of Commons. He admired George Canning, who at that time was fighting for the promulgation of Roman Catholic emancipation. There he re-dedicated himself to the cause of the emancipation of oppressed mankind, resolving to be a knight of the Holy Spirit for the rights of the people against the "Gedanken-schergen und Unterdruecker Heiligster Rechte".

On the quiet isle of Wangeroge and in Norderney he braced himself for another encounter with his uncle. The Buch der Lieder was published September 1827 and brought him popularity and fame. Along with his fame and recognition came an offer by Baron Cotta to be a correspondent of the Neue Allgemeine Politische Annalen. He soon gave up this editorship in the hope of receiving a professorship at the University of Muenchen through the poet-king Louis I. Awaiting the King's decision he set out from Muenchen for a journey to Italy. This journey was the best time of his life. It took him through Tyrol to Trent, Verona, Milan, and Florence. When no news of his expected appointment came he became uneasy. Hearing of his father's illness, he rushed to the bedside of the sick man, but news of his death

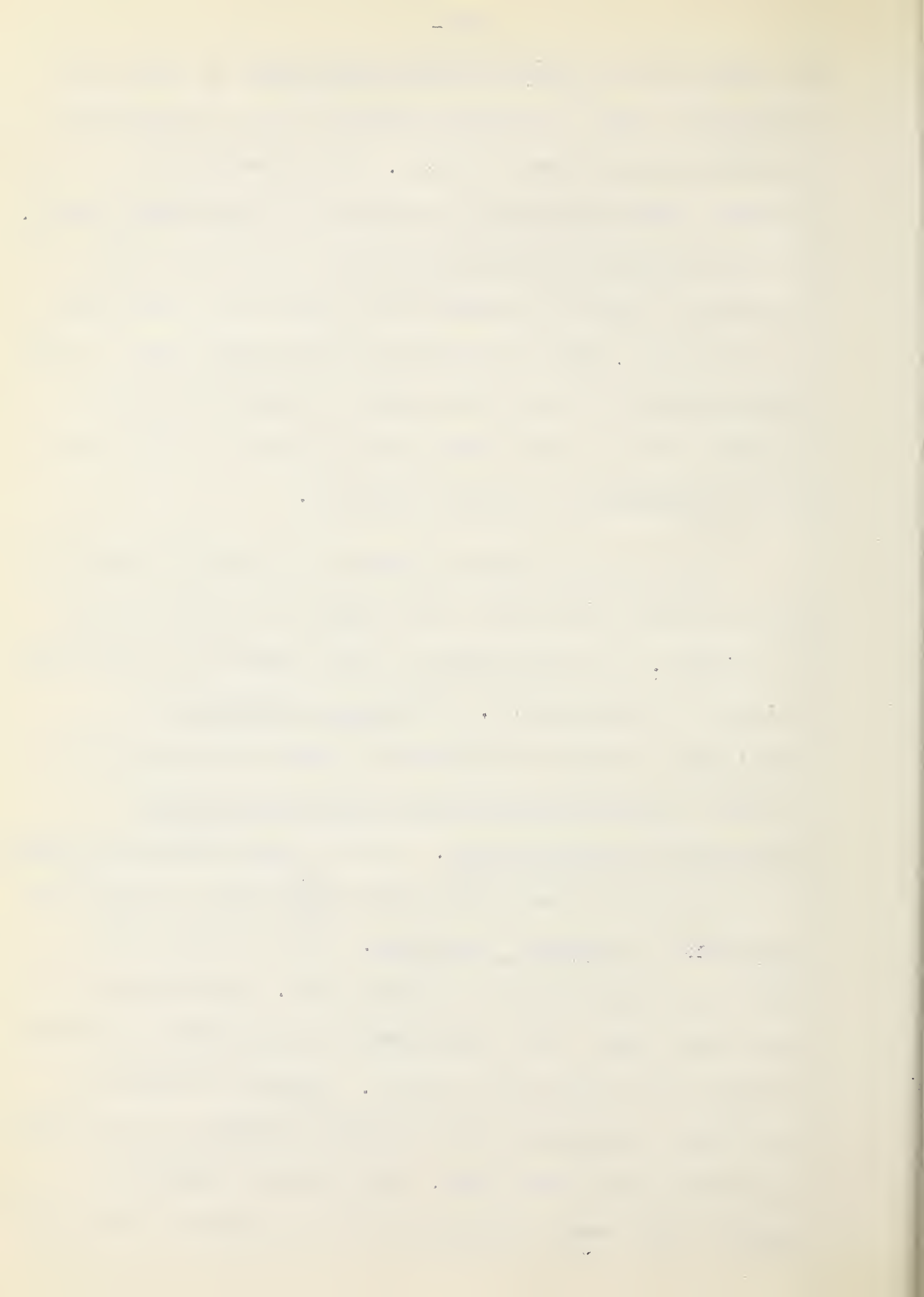
reached him in Wuertzberg. For months he was unable to work and became a recluse. While he was at Potsdam, Campe brought him a copy of the Romantischer Oedipus by Graf Platen, who, jealous of the attention and fame which had come to Heine, ridiculed him by calling him "Pindar von dem Stamme Benjamin", the "Petrarca des Laubhuettenfestes", whose "Kuesse Knoblauchgeruch absondern". He struck at Heine where he was most sensitive: his racial origin. Heine's reply was a stinging polemic in the third volume of the Reisebilder in which he attacked a secret vice of Platen's. The book roused a storm of indignation, because the manner of the attack offended the sensibilities of the readers. Platen started a court action but was persuaded by his friends to drop it. Heine lost many friends; those who had been loyal to him would do nothing to defend him. At first Heine retired from social life, spending his time in the company of such eccentrics as the deaf painter Johann Peter Lyse and the famous concert-violinist Paganini. On Helgoland news of the French Revolution of 1830 reached him. He was quite sure of his role in the coming battle for a new order in Europe. Evidences of his glowing enthusiasm are found in the Nachtraege zu den Reisebildern, the Briefe aus Helgoland, Das Buch Boerne and in the introduction to Kahldorf ueber den Adel. Heine was very disappointed

with the reception of the Revolution in Germany. Through his fearless denunciation of censorship, church, and aristocracy, he had made a further stay in Germany impossible, and therefore, on May 1, 1831, he went into self-imposed exile to France.

The politeness and elegance which was evident on the streets of gay Paris appealed to Heine's artistic temperament. He admired the grace of the Parisian girls and women. But more than that, was Heine impressed by the spirit of freedom and liberty which he found in evidence everywhere. Heine had come to Paris as a liberal émigré, he was handsome, charming and engaging in his manners, he was considered the leading poet of the Romantic School in Germany. All these qualities opened to him the doors of the famous salons of La Fayette and the Princesse Belgioso where he met Alfred Musset, Mignet, Thiers, Gautier, Victor Hugo, Alfred de Vigny, Balzac, George Sand, Hector Berlioz and Meyerbeer, many of whom became his life-long friends. The exclusive literary and social circles of Paris accepted Heine as one of themselves, a rare and enviable distinction for a German at that time. Cotta offered him the position of political correspondent for the Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung, a newspaper widely read in Europe. In a series of articles, which later

he published as Franzoesische Zustaende, he aired his democratic views, condemning every kind of oppression as found in the German states. The liberals in Germany condemned him as a traitor to the liberal cause. He was attacked by the Conservatives and by all the political leaders in Germany who, under the leadership of Metternich, were interested in one thing only -- the maintainance of the 'status quo'. Cotta was warned by Metternich to curb the spirit and pen of Heine, who as a consequence, lost his position.

When he saw himself hemmed in from all sides in his political activities, he turned to another sphere of writing. He saw himself as the "Vermittler deutschen Geistes in Frankreich", In Europe litteraire he published a popular treatise on German philosophy and religion: Zur Geschichte der deutschen schoenen Literature in Deutschland. In the Revue des deux Mondes he published in translation the Harzreise, the Buch Le Grand and the Baeder von Lucca. These brought him fame and recognition on foreign soil. In Germany, on the other hand, the 'Pharisaer of Nationality' launched attacks and criticism on Heine. Hostile dictates of the German government and Bundestag banned his writings, censorship mutilated them. For all his bitterness against the German tyranny, he kept burning in his heart



the pure flame of his love for Germany until the very end. Whenever in his letters, in his poetry, and in his writings he mentions Germany, sadness takes the sting out of his bitterness. He was homesick for a breath of German air, for the sound of the German language, for the 'gemuetliche' company of German people, but the doors of Germany were closed to him.

"Ich hatte einst ein schoenes Vaterland.
Der Eichenbaum
Wuchs dort so hoch, die Veilchen nickten sanft.
Es war ein Traum.

Das kuesste mich auf Deutsch, und sprach auf Deutsch
(Man glaubt es kaum,
Wie gut es klang) das Wort: "Ich liebe dich!"
Es war ein Traum." (1)

Like a ray of sunshine "Mathilde", Crescenia Eugenie Mirat, came into Heine's life. Beautiful, naive, passionate, devoted, impulsive, irresponsible, an unspoilt child of nature, she immediately won Heine's heart and affection. Heine's financial position was anything but enviable at this time. From his uncle he received an annual pension of 4000 francs, from Campe he had received 20,000 francs, and the French government paid him an 'allocation annuelle d'une pension de secours'. But Mathilde spend the money as soon as she received it. An added worry was the threatened loss of his eyesight. In order to make more money he tried all sorts of literary projects, among

them a German paper in Paris, but all were failures; his youthful experiences had shown that Heine was a poet and not a business man.

In Frankfurt Heine had called on Ludwig Boerne, a German-Jewish author of some note, who now lived in exile in Paris and was the spiritual leader of the German liberal émigrés. In 1833 he attacked Heine in his Pariser Briefe, and from then on hounded, attacked, and spied upon Heine. Boerne died in 1837; Heine published Das Buch Boerne in 1840 in which, ruthlessly and without mercy, he attacked Boerne as he had attacked Menzel and Platen. He insinuated an improper relationship between Boerne and Madame Strauss. As a result, he was challenged by Monsieur Strauss, the duel taking place September 7, 1841. Heine was wounded slightly in the hip. Characteristically, he shot in the air. Later he publicly retracted his accusations. A few days before the duel he legalised his liaison with Mathilde in a Roman Catholic church; a few days later he made her his sole heir. The poems of this period reflect bitterness, remorse, and laughter with a tear.

Heine saw Germany again in 1843. Permission to travel over Koeln was refused by the Prussian authorities, and Heine was forced to go by way of Holland. During his absence he wrote letters to Mathilde which show how

much he was attached to her. While in Hamburg, he sold all his future literary products to Campe for the sum of 24,000 francs annually, to be transferred to Mathilde in case of his death. In 1844 he went again to Hamburg taking with him Mathilde, but life in Hamburg was too dull for her, and under some pretext she went back to Paris as soon as she could. The same year saw the death of his uncle Salomon. No provisions outside of a very small cash settlement had been made. Karl Heine refused to recognise Heine's claim to the annual pension. This experience proved disastrous to Heine's failing health; it was the beginning of a long and painful martyrdom -- his 'Matratzengruft', mattress grave. Influential friends like Meyerbeer, Fuerst Pueckler-Muskau and Varnhagen tried to mediate in the family conflict, but all in vain.

In the meantime the paralysis spread from his eyes to his chest. His left eye was completely closed; reading and writing were extremely difficult. Heine wanted to consult a famous specialist, Professor Dieffenbach in Berlin, a former friend of his, but permission to do so was not granted. Never again did he see Germany. The paralysis continued to spread to other parts of his body. His lips were paralysed, he could not swallow, while at night a cough racked his

emaciated body. In 1846 he made a trip to the famous health baths in the Pyrennes where he found temporary relief. During his absence from Paris rumours spread in Germany that Heine had died, which he immediately repudiated. Karl Heine relented, made friendly overtures, and even recognised the claim to the pension on condition that he would neither write nor publish anything against Karl Heine, his wife, or her relatives.

The Revolution of 1848 found Heine distrustful of the Provisional Government. In order to prove Guizot's corruption, a list was published of all those who had received pensions during his term of office, among their number being Heine's name. As a result he was forever discredited in Germany; his efforts as a "go-between" were suspected.

Physically Heine was a broken man. He ventured out in the open once more and called on his friend Caroline Jaubert. But this effort was too much for him. Under the statue of the Venus of Milo in the Louvre he broke down and cried like a little child. In the autumn the paralysis relentlessly crept to his stomach and his legs. During that winter he suffered great pain due to the softening of the spinal column. But his clear and brilliant spirit ruled supreme -- it was

not fettered by the body. Financial worries, Mathilde's temper and her boisterous friends added to his pain. His old friends deserted him. Balzac and George Sand visited him now and then, but visits were few and far between. He was unable to polish his poetry with the customary meticulous care. Mathilde often burnt his precious poetry thinking that she was burning useless scraps of paper. In 1851 he surprised the world by publishing the Romanzero, his finest and purest poetry. He looked at life and at his illness with a sense of humour and with undaunted courage which won the admiration of friend and foe alike. Heinrich Laube, Alfred Meissner, Immanuel Fichte and Hektor Berlioz bear witness to the fact that in his mattress grave Heine was a hero.

His last days were not without their bright moments. The Koellner Maennergesangverein came to his bedside to sing some of his poems set to music by Mendelssohn. Charlotte, his sister and her husband visited him too, but he was often delirious. Mathilde was loyal to him to the end and looked after him faithfully. But as soon as Heine was carried out the front door, she left by the back door with another man.

The gracious figure and charming personality of the Mouche brightened the last days of Heine and gave

him a warm afterglow and some of the ecstasy of love that he had known in his younger days. The Mouche herself has left us the best record of these last days of Heine, whom we love and admire because he was a great man and a great poet, the greatest lyric poet of modern German literature.

"On that Sunday, February 17th, I awoke in a singular manner. Towards eight o'clock I heard a noise in my room, a kind of fluttering like that produced on summer evenings by moths entering the open window and seeking noisily for egress. I opened my eyes and closed them again immediately, for a black form was writhing like a gigantic insect in the dawn, and sought some way of escape.

The remembrance of that vision -- the only one I ever had, about which I make no comment, and only mention because of its strangeness, will always remain connected in my mind with the date of Heinrich Heine's death.

In spite of the cold and the remains of a severe indisposition, I knocked at ten o'clock at my dear poet's door. When told that he had gone to his last rest I felt stunned and scarcely understood it. After the first moment of stupor I asked to see him.

They took me into the silent rooms where, like a statue on a tomb, the body rested in the majestic calmness of death. Nothing human in that cold corpse, nothing which recalled the man who had loved, hated and suffered: an ancient mask over which the final calm cast a frost of haughty indifference, a pale, marble face, the pure profile recalling the most perfect chef d'oeuvre of Greek sculpture. Such I beheld him for the last time; his features, deified so to speak, brought to mind some beautiful allegory. Death showed itself just to a man who had loved it, and transformed him into a statue, when, like the divine figure depicted in his Die Wallfahrt nach Kevlaar, the great

consoler had, in the early morning hour, bent its steps towards the invalid's couch to release him from his suffering."(1)

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- (1) Selden, Camille: Les derniers jours de Henri Heine,
p. 96.

HEINE - RITTER DES HEILIGEN GEISTES

III HEINE, DER RITTER DES HEILIGEN GEISTES.

"Denn ich selber bin ein solcher
Ritter von dem heil'gen Geist." (1)

In both his poetry and in his prose Heine contended over and over again that he was 'ein Ritter des heiligen Geistes', -- a knight of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has been defined in a recent Statement of Faith as that force "by which God is ever at work in the minds and hearts of men inspiring every right desire and every effort after truth and beauty", (2) Heine expressed his conception of the work of the Holy Spirit in these words:

"Dieser tut die groessten Wunder
Und viel groessre tut er noch.
Er zerbrach die Zwingherrnburgen,
Und zerbrach des Knechtes Joch.

Alte Todeswunden heilt er,
Und erneut das alte Recht;
Alle Menschen gleichgeboren,
Sind ein adliges Geschlecht.

Er verscheucht die boesen Nebel
Und das dunkle Hirngespinnst,
Das uns Lieb und Lust verleidet,
Tag und Nacht uns begreinst." (3)

In many respects he was like the old prophets of his

(1) Harzreise, I, p. 207.

(2) Statement of Faith, The United Church of Canada, 1940.

(3) Harzreise, I, p. 206.

race. He fought for the rights of the people, for equality, liberty and fraternity. In that Heine was a child of the French Revolution. He fights against philistinism, pretense, sham and hypocrisy wherever he finds it. His call and his mission, the goal of his life, is one thing only:

"Wenn wir es dahin bringen koennen, dass die grosse Menge die Gegenwart versteht, so lassen die Voelker sich nicht mehr von den Lohnschreibern der Aristokratie zu Hass und Krieg verhetzen, das grosse Voelkerbuendnis, die heilige Alliance der Nationen, kommt zu stande, wir brauchen aus wechselseitigem Misstrauen keine stehenden Heere von vielen hunderttausend Moerdern mehr zu fuettern, wir benutzen zum Pflug ihre Schwerter und Rosse und wir erlangen Friede und Wohlstand und Freiheit. Dieser Wirksamkeit bleibt mein Leben gewidmet; es ist mein Amt." (1)

The time will come when the sun of liberty and freedom will lighten the darkness of oppression; but this will not come to pass during his life time. His part in this battle for the liberation of mankind from the bonds of slavery is clear-cut. He does not ask for any laurel wreaths, but for one thing only:

"Aber ein Schwert sollt ihr mir auf den Sarg legen; denn ich war ein braver Soldat im Befreiungskampfe der Menschheit." (2)

Looking back upon his life a few years before his death, he admits that he fought as an officer of fortune for a principle, never against individuals. Private

(1) Vorrede, Franzoesische Zustaende, VI - p. 8.

(2) Reisebilder, III - p. 249.

passions and prejudices never entered his mind, and after the battle he was ever willing to forgive and to forget. To a large extent this was true. No doubt, Heine idealised his part in and attitude to the battle. It is hard to forget the manner and circumstances of his attacks on Menzel, Platen, and Boerne. At the same time it is true, that he presented a bold and fearless front to those who withheld from the people those sacred rights and privileges which rightfully were theirs. In the literary, religious, social, and political spheres Heine was "ein Ritter des Heiligen Geistes".

1. Literary.

Heine's activities in the field of literature were nothing less than revolutionary. Heine's poetry and his prose works reveal a complex personality. The phases of his poetical life are not distinct and separate but imperceptibly change and shift and sometimes exist side by side. During the first phase the personal element is predominant. It is the period of the Buch der Lieder, Junge Leiden, and Traumbilder, -- a romantic dreamland charms those who enter it. It was the period of poetic awakening. With the second phase the poet enters a field of enlarged subjectivity, the world of human volition. It is the period of the poetry of isolation in which he reveals the dissonances of life and a longing for harmony. His dream land becomes a refuge from discordant reality. Especially is it the ocean which attracts and inspires the poet. The titanic powers of the ocean reflect Heine's troubled mind; the great deep represents the seething unrest of human life. During this period he wrote the second part of the Buch der Lieder, the Lyrical Interlude which contained poems of "world-forgetting and world-forgotten realms".(1) But the poet is not satisfied with this unreal world and

(1) Coar, J.F., Studies in German Literature in the Nineteenth Century, based on Ch. VIII.

he looks for new worlds to conquer. He entered on the third phase during which he attempted to measure life by the standards of a great natural phenomena, the Sea. The result of this was his Nordsee cycles. The Reisebilder, Das Buch le Grand also come out of this period. Poetry becomes a consecrated means to heavenly ends, -- liberty and all the principles of democracy. The fourth phase was one of poetic clarification. Democracy, liberty, and freedom, must come up from the masses and must not be imposed on them by a handful of enthusiasts. This would mean hard work, but Heine was willing to take up his pen and do his share in the battle for the rights of the common people. No party and no creed matters: the divine glory of life, the redeeming mission of the spirit of liberty. Deutschland, Die Romantische Schule, Atta Troll were written to accomplish that end. The fifth phase is one of resignation, and at the same time a period of imperial mastery of spirit over matter. In the Romanzero more than anywhere else the dualism of Heine takes the stage. Heine's poetry and prose works reveal to us his dualism, his complex personality. We look at him and say:

"Ich schau dich an, und Wehmut
Schleicht mir ins Herz hinein." (1)

(1) Die Heimkehr, I - p. 166.

He was torn between two worlds. In his effort to overcome the imperfections of human beings, he himself was too much the spirit that negates ever to find harmony within himself.

The first thing Heine did when he arrived in Paris was to go to the Bibliothèque royal there to examine the old codex containing the lyrics of the 'Minnesaenger' and to study with loving care the sweetest lyrics written by Germany's greatest lyric poet, Walter von der Vogelweide. Heine was destined to take a place next to the great Walter and next to Goethe. It is his lyric poetry that will live long after his prose writings have accumulated dust in the study of some conscientious student of literature, history and politics.

Leise zieht durch mein Gemuet, Du bist wie eine Blume, Und wuessten's die Blumen die kleinen, Die Wallfahrt nach Kevlaar, Nach Frankreich zogen zwei Grenadiere, Im wunderschoenen Monat Mai, Auf Fluegeln des Gesanges, Ein Fichtenbaum steht einsam, and many other poems belong to the finest German poetry ever written. They were singable. For this reason they became a precious and invaluable mine for musicians like Mendelssohn, Schumann, Franz, Rubinstein, Brahms,

Meyerbeer, Liszt and Wagner.

The influence of Romanticism on Heine was tremendous; yet evidence of his independence is found in the fact that he abandons romantic mediaevalism, vagueness, and formlessness. He makes the attempt to build a new 'Weltanschauung' on the ruins of Classicism. Mediaeval tales, songs, pictures, and art form a screen upon which the poet throws his individual experiences. Irony is the daughter of mysticism, the mother of poetry. Romantic irony grew out of the intense subjectivity of the poet's attitude to life and its manifold problems. It was a mixture of laughter and tears because of the apparent clash between reality and the ideal. The dualism in Heine finds its root in the constant battle going on within the poet between the imaginative fancy between his sensuousness and his reason. It not only destroyed the old, but it also created something new. Heine himself realised this when he called himself the 'Aufloeser der Romantik!!' Because the quest for truth is a white flame in the soul of the poet his perception of the inconsistencies of life is so much clearer. Falsehood, hypocrisy and pretense in all walks of life, in all classes of society, the opposition of life and ideal stand out and destroy the beauties of creation. The poet turns

against 'Weltordnug', God, and even against himself. The unreal and insincere romantic attitude to life and false sentimentality are destroyed through dissonance and cynicism. With Heine this was not simply a game, it was bitter earnestness. He accomplished it by a poetic means technically known as 'Stimmungsbrechung'. Heine builds up an exquisite picture, playing on all the strings of Romanticism, and then near the end breaks the spell by some shocking, humorous or repelling remark -- it became a characteristic constituent of Heine's poetry.

"Herr Bender steht vor der Leichenbahr,
Und seufzt aus Herzensgrunde:
Nun habe ich verloren mein schoenes Weib
Und meine treuen Hunde." (1)

"Jedwedem fuehlenden Herzen bleibt
Das Vaterland ewig teuer -
Ich liebe auch recht braun geschmort
Die Bueckinge und die Eier." (2)

Gliding in a boat over the sea he sees deep down at the bottom a city with houses and at a window his one and only love, the 'Immergeliebte, Laengstverlorene, Endlichgefundene", and he is just about to join her, when the captain grasps his foot, exclaiming:

"Doktor, sind Sie des Teufels?" (3)

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- (1) Neue Gedichte: Frau Mette, I - p. 344.
(2) Deutschland, II - p. 210.
(3) Die Nordsee: Seegespenst, I - p. 227.

The same tendency of 'Stimmungsbrechung' is evident in his prose. At the end of the Buch Boerne we find a romantic and symbolistic description of forests and shadows which, by the sheer beauty of it, casts a spell over the reader. The spell is broken mercilessly with the last sentence,

"Und ich selber erwachte gaehrend." (1)

Another illustration is the sentence in the Buch le Grand,

"Meine Fassion jetzt ist Liebe, Freiheit,
und Krebsuppe." (2)

Two passages illustrate the influence of the imagery and symbolism of Romanticism and incidentally Heine's wonderful power of description: the first is the one already referred to at the end of the Buch Boerne,

"Juengste Nacht traeumte mir von
einem grossen wuesten Walde." (3)

The second is the famous passage at the end of the Schwabenspiegel,

"Kennst du die Geschichte von dem jungen Ritter
der in den Zauberwald zog?" (4)

And yet it was Heine who, mastering all the tools of the Romantic poets, sang the "Last free song of Romanticism", -- Atta Troll. Sometimes it seems that

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- (1) Ludwig Boerne, VII - p. 371.
(2) Das Buch le Grand, III - p. 126.
(3) Ludwig Boerne, VII - p. 371.
(4) Der Schwabenspiegel, VIII - p. 211.

Heine is merely using his poetry as a toy, building up a mood only to destroy it; yet in nature we find the ridiculous and the sublime, idealism and realism, the pure and the sordid, side by side. The hyperbolic sentimentalism of the Romanticists was sweet and beautiful but not true to life. Heine took it upon himself to reject it in no half-hearted way, employing effectively satire, cynicism, irony, and 'Stimmungsbrechung'.

The importance of Heine's prose works lies in the fact that they, more than his poetry, formed the vehicle for expressing his revolutionary ideas on literature, religion, and politics. More than any other German writer did Heine influence German prose. Comparing the pompous, confusing, complex and involved style of Kant and of most of the German philosophers and of German literature of the early nineteenth century, with the lucidity, grace, biting satire, sparkling wit, terseness and simplicity of Heine's prose style, one is favourably impressed by the latter and by his marvellous command of the German language. In the Reisebilder Heine created a new type of descriptive literature. Humour and satire, laughter and tears, romanticism and idealism, poetic sentiments and religious honesty and sincerity, make the reading of

these pages a very interesting and profitable pastime. The breath of freedom and the promise of the dawn of a new era give to the Reisebilder an additional attraction of refreshing novelty. The humour in the Reisebilder is aristophanic, destructive. The romantic 'Weltanschauung' throughout is put there consciously by a sensitive artist who knows the value of contrast and employs it successfully. The style of the Reisebilder is evidence of the literary development of Heine. In the Harzreise we see the literary student at work, not quite sure of his tools, but knowing his goal; in the Stadt Lucca Heine is a full-fledged political correspondent, who knows the power of his pen and uses it to the best advantage. The Reisebilder formed the inspiration and model for many of the later correspondents who used this type of literature first successfully employed by Heine -- the Feuilleton.

As opposed to the formlessness of the Romanticists, Heine took great care in polishing his prose and poetry before releasing them for publication. His style is so natural, innocent and artless that one forgets that Heine acquired it through much hard work and experimentation. The contribution of Heine, the exiled Jew, literary artist, and inspired poet, to German literature is invaluable.

2. Religious.

Heine's religious revolutionary activities were not so much those of the abstract thinker as those of a man vitally interested in the quest for truth for his own individual and intellectual satisfaction. In his religion, although for a time he professed atheism, Heine was a Jew. In his early years he had put Christianity, which to him was negative, over against positive Hellenism. There was only either the religion of sorrow (Religion des Schmerzes), or religion of joy (Religion der Freude). Later on he admitted that it is not so much a question of "either - or" -- either absolute monarchy or republic; either critique of pure reason or experience; either religion or philosophy; either revelation or rational theology; either absolute Bible-God or atheism; because extreme positions are hardly ever tenable. Nonetheless, it is the cross of Christ which is responsible for the dualism between life and spirit.

"Unsre Zeit - und sie begann am Kreuze Christi - wird (von unsern Nachkommen) als eine grosse Krankheitsperiode betrachtet werden." (1)

(1) Aus den Memoiren des Herrn von Schnabelowski,

In addition,

"die Idee des Christentums ist die Vernichtung der Sinnlichkeit." (1)

and

"der heilige Geist offenbart sich am herrlichsten im Licht und im Lachen." (2)

If, then, Christianity is not the true religion, what is? Heine has only one answer: Liberty!

"Die Freiheit ist eine neue Religion, die Religion unserer Zeit. Wenn Christus auch nicht der Gott dieser Religion ist, so ist er doch ein Hohepriester derselben, und sein Name strahlt beseligend in den Herzen der Juenger. Die Franzosen sind aber das auserwählte Volk der neuen Religion, in ihrer Sprache sind die ersten Evangelien und Dogmen verzeichnet, Paris ist das neue Jerusalem, und der Rhein ist der Jordan, der das geweihte Land der Freiheit trennt von dem Land der Philister." (3)

Statements like these would not endear him to the philistines across the Rhine. But at all times Heine was desperately sincere in his convictions.

Heine seems to distinguish between the spirit, the principle of Christianity and between the professing Christianity of his day. He sees the inconsistency between Christian word and Christian deed, the hypocrisy, so prevalent in Christian circles, and these he attacks. The Christian God is supposedly a God of

(1) Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland, V - p. 33.

(2) Aus den Memoiren des Herrn von Schnabelowski, IV - p. 304.

(3) Englische Fragmente, IV - p. 84.

Love, yet the Cajoten must enter by a special door the cathedral at Bagneres.

"Dort auf einem niedern Schemel
Sass der Cajot, einsam betend,
Und gesondert, wie verpestet,
Von der uebrigen Gemeinde." (1)

while the candles burn on cheerfully and with indifference, bringing light into the mediaeval darkness. Mynheer van Koek, as good a Christian as ever there was, has in his slaveship black slaves, whom he wants to sell at a profit in Rio de Janeiro. While he adds up his profits the ship's surgeon informs him that many of the slaves are dying. This will never do. And Mynheer van Koek appeals to God:

"Verschone ihr Leben um Christi willen,
Der fuer uns alle gestorben!
Denn bleiben mir nicht dreihundert Stueck,
So ist mein Geschaeft verloren." (2)

It is 'Scheinheiligkeit, Heuchelei und ⁵ Gleissendes Froemmeln' that he attacks and ridicules, never the religion of true, honest, sincere and devout believers. While in Lucca Heine watches a procession pass in all its splendour, beautiful jewelled vestments, brilliant colours, and innumerable attendants, and the picture of Christ, bearing his cross to the lone hill comes to

(1) Atta Troll, II - p. 142.

(2) Das Sklavenschiff, II - p. 434.

his mind. He was attended too, but by brutal soldiers and by the jeers of the populace. Jesus did not run away from the disappointments of life to hide himself in a monastery. He faced life and his opponents courageously.

His attitude to the different religious organisations is one of dispassionate and objective criticism. Since he is a friend of state and of religion, he hates state-religion. Only under severe strain and persecution can religion retain its pristine purity. The supreme example is early Christianity.

"Da war's noch die Legende von einem heimlichen Gotte, der in sanfter Juenglingsgestalt unter den Palmen Palestinas wandelte und Menschenliebe predigte und jene Freiheits - und Gleichheits - lehre offenbarte, die auch spaeter die Vernunft der groessten Denker als wahr erkannt hat, und die, als franzoesisches Evangelium, unsre Zeit begeisterte." (1)

Instead there is so much pretense, hypocrisy, exploitation of the Christian "have-nots" by the Christian "haves". The orthodox Jew lives too much in the past, and finds escape from the unpleasant realities of life in the ritual and ceremonials of Judaism. The modern Jew is ready to abandon, for financial gain and social position the faith of his fathers, and "Gumpelein" changes his

(1) Die Stadt Lucca, III - 382.

name to "Marchese Christofore di Gumpeline"; but forgets that the change in name does not necessarily change his physical features:

"Man konnte es ihm naemlich an der Nase ansehen, dass er von gutem Adel war, dass er von einer uralten Weltfamilie abstammte, womit sich sogar einst der liebe Gott, ohne Furcht vor Mesalliance, verschwaegert hat." (1)

During the last years of his life Heine realised the great contribution of Judaism to the evolution of religion in the Old Testament: ethical monotheism and love of freedom. Moses was a socialist who hated slavery; the prophets, besides proclaiming that the Eternal requires justice, kindness, and quiet fellowship with God, fought for social justice; Jesus was a communist in the purest sense of that term. The senseless quarrels between the members of opposing religious factions are ridiculed in Disputation. He pictures the monk and the Jew, who in their fanaticism contradict their religious professions by their actions:

"Welcher Recht hat, weiss ich nicht, -
Doch es will mir schier beduenken
Dass der Rabbi und der Moench,
Dass sie alle beide stinken." (2)

That is Heine's position. There is only one religion, the religion of religion:

(1) Die Baeder von Lucca, III - p. 261.
(2) Romanzero, II - p. 428.

"Alle Religionen sind gleich heilig, denn bei aller Verschiedenheit der aeusseren Form haben sie doch ein und denselben Geist. Das ist die Religion der Religionen." (1)

Roman Catholicism appealed to Heine. First and foremost he was a poet. The poetry, symbolism, and virgin-cult appealed to his artistic sensibilities. He had also known and loved in his boyhood days in Duesseldorf a kindly man, the Rektor Schallmeyer, his teacher. Most of the teachers at Duesseldorf had been Roman Catholic priests, and they were masters in the art of pedagogy. Also the greatest men of the Revolution had come out of Jesuit schools, without whose discipline the great movement would not have come to pass for at least another hundred years. The selfish, hypocritical priest he despises and exposes; the unselfishly devoted priest he admires and extolls his virtues as did Chaucer.

Protestantism he admires chiefly because of the great leader of the Reformation, Dr. Martin Luther. Luther was not only one of the greatest but also the most German of the Germans;

"Nicht bloss der groesste, sondern auch der deutsche Mann unserer Geschichte, ein traemender Mystiker und ein praktischer Mann der Tat." (2)

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- (1) Die Stadt Lucca, III - p. 373 (footnote)
(2) Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland. V - p. 40.

He gave Germany three things. Firstly, liberty, by making the Bible and reason the basis of life. Spiritual freedom (~~Geistes~~-freiheit) brought about liberty of thought ('Denkfreiheit') which in turn had in it the germs of freedom of speech, freedom of inquiry, and academic freedom. Luther was such a knight of the Holy Spirit, who had fought for democratic principles, and Heine, too, was such a knight of the Holy Spirit. The great philosophies of Leibnitz, Kant and Hegel would have been impossible without his preparatory work. Secondly, Luther gave the Germans the German language, and thus welded Germany politically and religiously divided, into a literary unity. Thirdly, ^{modern} German literature begins with the poems, sermons, lyrics and 'Tischreden' of Luther. Luther emancipated Germany from tradition and an outworn, rotten and unjust church system. He made the Bible the source of Christianity. Unfortunately the result was that the letter rather than the spirit of the Bible reigned supreme in the years after the Reformation. Thanks to Lessing, Germany was freed from the slavery of the letter.

During his last years Heine's conception of God was that of Judaism. He returned to the faith of his fathers. He often expressed the thought that religious sentiment without any positive dogma is sufficient for

the poet. In his early years he adhered to the doctrine of the pure immanency of God:

"Alles ist nicht Gott, sondern Gott ist alles; Gott manifestiert sich nicht in gleichem Masse in allen Dingen, er manifestiert sich vielmehr nach verschiedenen Graden in den verschiedenen Dingen - Gott ist in der Bewegung, in der Handlung, in der Zeit, sein heiliger Odem weht durch die Blaetter der Geschichte. Letztere ist das eigentliche Buch Gottes - und jeder traegt in sich den Drang, einen hoeheren Grad der Goettlichkeit zu erlangen; und das ist das grosse Gesetz des Fortschrittes in der Natur." (1)

The problem of the transcendence and immanence of God is one of the most vital in Christian theology. It is sometimes contended that God is a personal spirit who transcends the world, yet who is in it as its originating, vital, acting principle:

"God is everywhere and always present in the universe, nowhere absent from it, never separated from its life - that is transcendence. God is not shut up in the universe, not limited by it, not required in his totality to maintain and order it - that is immanence. By both together is meant that he is a free spirit, inhabiting the universe, but surpassing it - immanent as always in the universe, and transcendent, as always independent of its limitations and able to act upon it." (2)

"Transcendence without immanence would give us Deism, cold and barren; immanence without transcendence would give us Pantheism, fatalistic and paralyzing." (3)

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- (1) Die romantische Schule, V - p. 188.
 - (2) Clarke, W.N.: An Outline of Christian Theology, pp. 129-130.
 - (3) Ibid p. 130.

Heine was not a theologian and these distinctions probably never entered his mind. He felt the opposition of the subject to the object, and also that they were related to each other, that one without the other could not exist, the Eternal, God, being the uniting principle from which both must spring and of which both are manifestations. Toward the end Heine came to believe in a personal God, since personality is the highest quality known at present. He was always careful to hide from Mathilde the fact that he was a Jew. But in the night, when faithful pain returned to his 'Matratzengruft', he made his prayers to God, cursed and reproached him, but also found a strange consolation in the thought that there was some force or power with awareness, intelligence, purposiveness, with the capacity to appreciate and to respond. Heine asserts this transcendence of God:

"Ich ehre die innere Heiligkeit jeder Religion und unterwerfe mich den Interessen des Staates. Wenn ich auch dem Anthropomorphismus nicht sonderlich huldige, so glaube ich doch an die Herrlichkeit Gottes." (1)

And again in the Nachwort zum Romanzero, written in the fall of 1851:

"Wenn man einen Gott begehrt, der zu helfen vermag und das ist doch die Hauptsache - so muss man auch seine Persoenlichkeit, seine

(1) Die Stadt Lucca, III - p. 380.

Ausserweltlichkeit, und seine heiligen Attribute, die Allguete, die Allweisheit, die Allgerechtigkeit, u.s.w. annehmen. Die Unsterblichkeit der Seele, die Fortdauer nach dem Tode, wird uns alsdann gleichsam, mit in den Kauf gegeben." (1)

It is strange that he should worry about the immortality of the soul, but he did. When in the fall of 1851 Immanuel Hermann Fichte, the son of the great Fichte, visited him, Heine was very anxious to find his vague gropings about immortality confirmed by a professional philosopher. Heine was not concerned about social immortality or the immortality of influence. As his God had to be nothing less than a personal God, so his immortality meant personal immortality. Selfish and egotistical such a conception might be to the modern mind. On the other hand, modern science asserts that time is not static but a flow: every moment partakes of the breath of eternity. To Heine this became a certainty:

"Wie streubt sich unsre Seele gegen den Gedanken des Aufhoerens unserer Persoenlichkeit, der ewigen Vernichtung! Der horror vacui, den man der Natur zuschreibt, ist vielmehr dem menschlichen Gemuete angeborn. Sei getrost, teurer Leser, es giebt eine Fortdauer nach dem Tode, und in der andern Welt werden wir auch unsere Seehunde wiederfinden." (2)

As a religious knight he took his place beside

(1) Nachwort zum Romanzero, II - p. 260.

(2) Ibid p. 263.

Moses, Luther, Jesus, and the great prophets. All these had fought and suffered for democratic principles and for a larger spiritual life. They were knights of the Holy Spirit, and he was proud to be one of their number. Jesus came to occupy a high place in his admiration, because he, too, and perhaps more than anyone else, was a liberating hero of humanity:

"Es giebt wahrhaftig keinen Sozialisten der terroristischer waere, als unser Herr und Heiland." (1)

Jesus had died because he dared to attack the existing evils of church and state. He is the god of the poor and the oppressed. Although his father is king, he himself is very democratic:

"Es ist der Gott, den ich am meisten liebe - nicht weil er so ein legitimer Gott ist, dessen Vater schon Gott war und seit undenklicher Zeit die Welt beherrschte, sondern weil er, obgleich ein geborener Dauphin des Himmels, dennoch demokratisch gesinnt, keinen hoefischen Zeremonialprunk liebt, weil er kein Gott einer Aristokratie von geschorenen Schriftgelehrten und galonierten Lanzknechten, und weil er ein bescheidener Gott des Volks ist, ein Buerger-Gott, un bon dieu citoyen." (2)

Heine definitely refused to identify himself with any one religious system. Gustav Karpeles, the great Heine biographer, says of him in this connection:

(1) Gestaendnisse, VII - p. 479.

(2) Die Stadt Lucca, III - p. 362.

"Heine hing seinem angeborenen Instinkt gemaess der juedischen Religion an, mit der Phantasie war er Katholik und mit dem Verstande Protestant. Dieser Umstand wird seine katholischen Sympathieen, seine Verherrlichung Luthers und seine religioese Stimmung auf dem Krankenbette genuegend erkl hoeren." (1)

His religion was more inclusive and was not limited by any narrow confines of creed or dogma. It was probably bad theology, but the vitality, power and revolutionary force of all religions, and especially of the religion of the religions, is eternal. He proclaimed the teachings of Christianity in a way which challenged his readers, and which was revolutionary at a time when Christianity had lost the beauty, attractiveness and purity of its youth. Nowhere does his religion find a finer and more attractive expression than when he states that the life and the spirit of true religion is a life of "humble, loving service for others, with no thought of return". (2) True religion does not worry about the rewards of heaven or the punishments of hell:

"Ich strebe nach dem Guten, weil es schoen ist und mich unwiderstehlich anzieht, und ich verabscheue das Schlechte, weil es haesslich und mir zuwider ist." (3)

and again:

"Alle unsre Handlungen sollen aus dem Quell

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- (1) Karpeles, G.: Heines Gesammelte Werke, Introduction, p. LVI.
(2) Quotation from Dr. Clyo Jackson's lectures.
(3) Die Stadt Lucca, III - p. 365.

einer uneigennuetzigen Liebe hervorsprudeln,
gleichviel ob es eine Fortdauer nach dem
Tode giebt oder nicht." (1)

In the religious sphere Heine was a 'Ritter des
Heiligen Geistes'.

(1) Die Stadt Lucca, III - p. 365.

3. Social.

"Ein neues Lied, ein besseres Lied,
O Freunde, will ich euch dichten:
Wir wollen hier auf Erden schon
Das Himmelreich errichten." (1)

Heine's revolutionary tendencies take into account not only the literary and the religious, but also the social spheres. Heine was vitally interested in the fate of the under-dog in society. Social betterment is not to come about in some problematical hereafter but in this present world:

"Schon hier auf Erden moechte ich durch die Segnungen freier politischer und industrieller Institutionen jene Seligkeit etablieren, die nach der Meinung der Frommen erst am juengsten Tage im Himmel stattfinden sollen." (2)

Against the privileged classes who are largely responsible for the plight of the common man -- the clergy, the aristocracy, and the idle rich -- Heine levels his attack. He advocated the breaking down of the barriers between the classes, the realisation of social equality. No one knew better than Heine that there can be no complete equality.

"It is clear that man can never be in all or even in most respects equal. They cannot be equally strong, happy, healthy, able, useful, popular, or happy. But we can try to give them equal opportunities of becoming so." (3)

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- (1) Deutschland, I - p. 191.
(2) Zur Geschichte der Religion and Philosophie in Deutschland, V - p. 21.
(3) Carritt, E. F.: Morals and Politics, p. 191.

In his early dramatic attempt (Ratcliff, 1822) Heine showed that there was such a thing as "Die grosse Suppenfrage des Sozialismus".

"Am Herde des ehrlichen Tom im "Ratcliff" brodeln schon die grosse Suppenfrage, worin jetzt tausend verdorbene Koeche herumloeffeln, und die taeglich schaeumender ueberkocht." (1)

This was written in 1851; but already in the days of his youth Heine was conscious of the existence of such a problem. Righteous anger fills his soul when he sees how those who are privileged look down on the less fortunate and do everything in their power to preserve the 'status quo' at the expense of the under-dog. Tom divides the classes of society in two opposing factions:

"So dacht ich auch, und teilte ein die Menschen
In zwei Nationen, die sich wild bekriegen,
Naemlich in Satte und in Hungerleider.
Weil ich zu der letzteren Partei gehoerte,
So musst ich mit den Satten oft mich balgen." (2)

And then comes a note of disillusionment and despair. The battle is too unequal; the odds are too great.

"Doch hab ich eingesehen, der Kampf ist ungleich
Und zieh mich allmaehlich zurueck vom Handwerk." (3)

The poet does not share this conviction with Tom. He is ready to do battle. His heart is brave, his mind is clear and fresh, his sword is ready to strike at existing evil social conditions.

(1) Vorrede zum William Ratcliff, II - p. 66.

(2) Ratcliff, II - p. 80.

(3) Ibid, p. 80.

The Silesian weavers were suffering great want, so much so that on July 4, 1844 they revolted in the mountain villages of Peterswalden and Langenbielau. In complete sympathy with their cause, Heine gave vent to his pent-up indignation in Die Weber.

"Im duestern Auge keine Traene,
Sie sitzen am Webstuhl und fletschen die Zaehne:
Deutschland, wir weben dein Leichentuch,
Wir weben hinein den dreifachen Fluch -
Wir weben, wir weben!

Ein Fluch dem Goetzen, zu dem wir gebeten
In Winterskaelte und Hungersnoeten;
Wir haben vergebens gehofft und geharrt,
Er hat uns geaefft und gefoppt und genarrt -
Wir weben, wir weben!

Ein Fluch dem Koenig, dem Koenig der Reichen,
Den unser Elend nicht konnte erweichen,
Der den letzten Groschen von uns erpresst,
Und uns wie Hunde erschiessen laesst -
Wir weben, wir weben!

Ein Fluch dem falschen Vaterlande
Wo nur gedeihen Schmach und Schande,
Wo jede Blume frueh geknickt,
Wo Faeulnis und Moder den Wurm erquickt -
Wir weben, wir weben!

Das Schiffchen fliegt, der Webstuhl kracht,
Wir weben emsig Tag und Nacht -
Altdeutschland, wir weben dein Leichentuch,
Wir weben hinein den dreifachen Fluch.
Wir weben, wir weben!" (1)

The repressed fury in this poem is frightening. It contains likewise the poet's denunciation of those institutions in which the common man had put his trust and to which he had looked for deliverance. A curse

(1) Zeitgedichte: Die Weber, I - p. 382.

is pronounced on the deistic dogmas, another curse on the aristocratic royalty, and still another on those who entertain a false conception of the fatherland.

In Jammerthal, published a year after Heine's death, the poet paints a pathetic picture of "two souls" who die of want and hunger, and of the lack of protection from the merciless beatings of wind, rain, cold and snow:

"Am Morgen kommt der Kommissaer,
Und mit ihm kam ein braver
Chirurgus, welcher konstatiert
Den Tod der beiden Kadaver.

Die strange Wittrung, erklaert er,
Mit Magenleere vereinigt,
Hat beider Ableben beschleunigt.

Wenn Froeste einsetzen, setzt er hinzu,
Sei hoechst notwendig Verwahrung
Durch wollene Decken; er empfahl
Gleichfalls gesunde Nahrung." (1)

The picture of cruel indifference on the part of the investigators who treat the human corpses like animals and who prescribe woolen blankets and nourishing food when it is too late, rouses the reader's indignation to the breaking point.

Heine never was too fond of the Aristocracy.

(1) Letzte Gedichte: Jammerthal, II - p. 445.

He singles them out especially for his biting satire and merciless flayings. In Norderney he likens the ill-bred German nobility to their racehorses, about whom they talk night and day. Like them, the aristocrats are glossy, shiny, well-fed, but completely unconcerned about the needs and wants of the under-privileged classes. Like their horses, their heads and their hearts are empty. Aristocracy is the same all over the face of the earth. In London he cannot help but notice the contrast in the streets between the filthy, ragged beggars, and the elegant, well-fed nobility, looking down with self-satisfied, genteel smugness and indifference on the common man:

"als waeren es winzige Ameisen, oder doch nur ein Haufen niedriger Geschoepfe, deren Lust und Schmerz mit seinen Gefuehlen nichts gemein hat." (1)

What, then, is to be done about this vicious circle? Heine answers with the words of Jesus:

"No one sews a piece of undressed cloth on an old coat, for the patch breaks away from it, and the tear is made worse: nor do men pour fresh wine into old wineskins, otherwise the wineskins burst, and the wine is spilt, the wineskins are ruined. Fresh wine they pour into fresh wineskins." (2)

There is not only a hidden threat but also a solution

(1) Englische Fragmente, IV - p. 14.
(2) Matt. 9:16, Dr. Moffatt's translation.

contained in these words, and Heine continues to elaborate on it:

"Die tiefste Wahrheit erblueht nur der tiefsten Liebe, und daher die Uebereinstimmung in den Ansichten des Aelteren Bergpredigers, der gegen die Aristokratie von Jerusalem gesprochen, und jener spaeteren Bergprediger, die von der Hoeke des Konvents zu Paris ein dreifarbiges Evangelium herabpredigten, wonach nicht blos die Form des Staates, sondern das ganze gesellschaftliche Leben, nicht geflickt, sondern neu gestaltet, neu begruendet, ja neu geboren werden sollte." (1)

(1) Englische Fragmente, IV - p. 81.

4. Political.

"Die Emanzipation des Volkes war die grosse Aufgabe meines Lebens und wir haben dafür gerungen und namenloses Elend ertragen, in der Heimat wie im Exil." (1)

The new day of liberty will break, the sun will shine brightly into the lives and thoughts of a new and happier generation; but those who fought for this ideal will have gone and will be forgotten: only too short is the life of ordinary mortal beings, and at the end there waits the oblivion of the silent grave. Heine himself, who has fought so valiantly, what will be his fate?

"Ich selbst bin verschollen, vielleicht noch von wenigen geehrt, von vielen verhoehnt, und von niemand geliebt." (2)

Heine does not fret; for those who give themselves to the service of mankind expect no return but the satisfaction of knowing that future generations will be born free -- free from the social, religious and political tyranny of the past.

Heine's reason for attacking the aristocracy is clear. It is this class more than any other that naturally is interested in preserving things as they are.

(1) Gestaendnisse, VII - p. 459.

(2) Das Buch le Grand, III - p. 119.

In its opposition to the French Revolution, the aristocracy of Germany, Austria and England presented a united Front. In 1837 Heine defined the aristocracy as 'L'exploitation de l'homme par l'homme', or as "Alle die auf Kosten des Volkes leben". Heine's dislike of Prussia and England converge on one point: Napoleon at Waterloo, where according to Heine, democracy was opposed by aristocracy.

"Und diese letztere siegte, die schlechte Sache des verjaehrten Vorrechts, der servile Knechtsinn und die Luege triumphierten, und es waren die Interessen der Freiheit, der Gleichheit, der Bruederschaft, der Wahrheit und Vernunft,^{es} war die Menschheit, welche zu Waterloo die Schlacht verloren." (1)

Not only is the aristocracy fighting for principles odious to its super-refined tastes, but it is fighting for its very existence. In England church and aristocracy work together hand in hand to preserve their ancient privileges, built on the blood and sweat of John Bull:

"Auf der einen Seite droht ihm (i.e. John Bull) der Herzog von Wellington mit dem Schwerte, und auf der anderen Seite schlaegt ihm der Erzbischof von Canterbury mit der Bibel auf den Kopf - und es wird Ruhe im Lande sein." (2)

It is the selfish prerogatives of a privileged class that stand in the path of progress and development,

(1) Waterloo, VII - p. 493.

(2) Englische Fragmente, IV - p. 40.

in the path of the emancipation of the masses, and that consequently should be removed. They think that they are God's representatives on earth, and cannot understand that if a heart beats for liberty, such a beat of the heart is as good, nay even better, than a 'Ritterschlag'. Nevertheless the ideal man is Lafayette, who combines the best of the old order with the best of the new:

"Das Beste des alten Regimes, das Chevalreske, die Hoeflichkeit, der Takt, ist hier wunderbar verschmolzen mit dem Besten des neuen Buergetums, der Gleichheitsliebe, der Frunklosigkeit und der Ehrlichkeit." (1)

In his writings, especially the earlier ones, Heine does not leave a shadow of a doubt about his attitude to the first French Revolution. He was a natural lover of liberty. He belonged to the race of the hunted, therefore he hated oppression in all its manifestations. It was this defiance of the old order which inspired him to kiss the social pariah, "das rote Sefchen", his first youthful love. In his Memoiren he tells that at that moment two passions were ~~born~~ within him: one for beautiful women, the other for the French Revolution. Both were to stay faithfully with him to the bitter end. The French Revolution was

(1) Franzosiche Zustände, VI - p.42.

a revolution against the tyranny of oppression, the first step in the emancipation of the people. It represented the ideals of liberté, égalité, fraternité. When the Bourbons returned to the throne, it soon became evident that they had not profitted by the experiences of the past. A further step in the development of the rights of the people must be taken:

"Was ist aber die grosse Aufgabe der Zeit?

Es ist die Emanzipation. Nicht blos die der Irlaender, Griechen, Frankfurter Juden, west-indischen Schwarzen und dergleichen gedruckten Volkes, sondern es ist die Emanzipation der ganzen Welt, absonderlich Europas, das muendig geworden ist, und sich jetzt losreisst von dem eisernen Gaengelbande der Bevorrechten, der Aristokratie." (1)

A change must come: a change is imminent. A poet is very sensitive, and with his intuitive sense he looks into the future "far as human eye can see". The question of vital concern to everyone is: what shall be the manner of that change, and who shall be the agents?

Communism offered one of the solutions. Heine's statement of this revolutionary theory shows his fairness. He presents both sides of the case. His logic speaks for Communism, because the old system is rotten and must go. So does his hatred of hypocrisy

(1) Reisebilder II: Italien, III - p. 243.

in general, and of the extreme nationalists in Germany in particular. Besides, the Communist doctrine includes those tenets so fundamental to the 'Urchristentum', -- an absolute cosmopolitanism, an all-inclusive love of all people; it proposes an equalised fraternity of all people, and attempts to make all people free citizens of the world. It is the Communists who are the real Christians as opposed to the unreasonable nationalists of his day. But the soul of the poet abhors violence in any shape or form. Agreeing with the doctrinal side of Communism, since they and he are fighting a common foe and for the same end, he finds an insurmountable barrier between his and their convictions:

"Nur mit Schrecken und Entsetzen denke ich an die Epoche in welcher diese finstern Bilderstuermer an die Herrschaft gelangen werden; mit ihren schwieligen Haenden werden sie ohne Gnade die Marmorstatuen der Schoenheit, die meinem Herzen so teuer sind, zerbrechen." (1)

But that is not all. They probably will do one thing at the thought of which the sensitive poet recoils:

"Mein 'Buch der Lieder' wird dem Gewuerzkraemer dazu dienen, um daraus Tueten zu drehen, in welchen er Kaffee oder Schnupftabak fuer die alten Weiber der Zukunft hineinschuetten wird." (2)

Communism threatens the civilization which through

(1) Lutetia, VI - 215.

(2) Ibid, VI - p. 215.

many hundreds of years has been built up, and the artist and scholar must reject any principles which advocate Nemesis.

What then about the revolution in Germany which must and will come? The German people have shown in their fight for religious freedom that once they start on a programme of construction they finish it. Philosophy, too, was followed through to its consequential ending. Will the same thing be realised in politics? Will the revolution that is to ~~be~~ come be 'trocken' or 'nassrot'? The example of the first French Revolution is still freshly written in bloody letters on the pages of history:

"Der Charakter der franzoesischen Revolution war aber zu jeder Zeit bedingt von dem moralischen Zustande des Volkes, und besonders von seiner politischen Bildung. Vor dem ersten Ausbruch der Revolution in Frankreich gab es dort zwar eine schon fertige Zivilisation, aber doch nur in den hoeheren Staenden und hie und da im Mittelstande; die unteren Klassen waren geistig verwahrlost, und durch den engherzigsten Despotismus von jedem edlen Emporstreben abgehalten. Was aber gar politische Bildung betrifft, so fehlte sie nicht nur jenen unteren, sondern auch den oberen Klassen." (1)

There is no need of a repetition of the bloody experiment in France. Revolutions of the future should profit by the experiences of the past. Change must come through democratic institutions which will do away with violence.

(1) Einleitung; "Kahldorf über den Adel", VIII - p. 157.

Heine's democracy was enunciated in the battle-cry of the French Revolution: Liberté, égalité, fraternité. The very fact that many of Heine's revolutionary tendencies no longer seem revolutionary today should not obscure the fact that Heine was one of the soldiers in the front line of the Battle of the Emancipation of the people.

Democracy is a way of life, social and individual. The key-note of democracy is "the necessity for the participation of every mature human being in formation of values that regulate the living of men together". (1) One of the first essentials of democracy is the belief in the essential dignity of man. Faith in the capacities of human nature, in the power of human intelligence general enough to allow everyone to contribute to the common good; faith in the power of pooled and co-operative experience; belief in equality, not of natural endowments, but equality of treatment by the law and in its administration and of opportunity -- all these are the more important constituents of democracy. These will bring about freedom of action, realising those precious heritages listed in the "Bill of Rights" -- freedom of belief and conscience, freedom of expression of opinion,

(1) Dewey, John: Democracy and Educational Administration, John Dewey's Philosophy, pp. 400-404.

freedom of assembly for discussion and conference, freedom of the press as an organ of communication. But these privileges demand a sense of obligation to the greater whole and must be backed by intelligence and informed conviction.

These are modern definitions of democracy. For these principles men have shed, are shedding and will continue to shed their blood: for they are dearer than life itself; without them life would not be worth living; for them Heine, too, "fought and suffered at home and in exile". They are part and parcel of our life and thought because men like Heine took up the sword:

"nicht fuer die Menschenrechte des Volks, sondern fuer die Gottesrechte des Menschen. Hierin und in noch manch andern Dingen unterscheiden wir uns von den Maennern der Revolution. Wir wollen keine Sanskuelotten sein, keine frugalen Buerger, keine wohlfeilen Praesidenten; wir stiften eine Demokratie gleichherrlicher, gleichheiliger gleichbeseligter Goetter." (1)

This democracy can come about only if the feeling for liberty and for freedom is also part of the thinking of the masses.

"Die Freiheit, die bisher nur hier und da Mensch geworden, muss auch in die Massen selbst, in die untersten Schichten der Gesellschaft uebergehen und Volk werden." (2)

(1) Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophy in Deutschland, V - p. 72.

(2) Lutetia, VI - p. 395.

Heine realised that this could not happen in the twinkling of an eye, but would take a long time. In Deutschland he describes a dream in which he comes to the cave of Kaiser Rotbart, who according to the Sage, was biding his time, collecting soldiers and horses, and then one day would come to the deliverance of his German people. Kaiser Rotbart counts his soldiers and his horses and must admit sadly that there are not yet enough, and that Germany

"Mein Vaterland, mein deutsches Volk,
Das meiner harrt in Treue," (1)

must wait. In his impetuosity and impatience the poet urges him to start the battle.

"Der Rotbart erwiderte laechelnd: 'Es hat
Mit dem Schlagen gar keine Eile,
Man baute nicht Rom in einem Tag,
Gut Ding will haben Weile.'" (2)

To bring democracy to the masses, to make them democracy-conscious, takes time, patience and education.

Another factor that must be taken into account is the people themselves -- the masses. Heine, the knight of the Holy Spirit, had dedicated his life and pen to the cause of emancipation of humanity. Opposition, suffering, want and persecution were unable to deviate him from that path:

(1) Deutschland, II - p. 222.

(2) Ibid.

"Denn du, mein Volk, bist der wahre Kaiser, der wahre Herr des Landes - dein Wille ist souveräner und viel legitimer, als jenes purpurne Tel est notre plaisir, das sich auf ein göttliches Recht beruft, ohne alle andre Gewährung als die Salbadereien gescho-rener Gaukler - dein Wille, mein Volk, ist die alleinige rechtmässige Quelle aller Macht." (1)

Although he postulates that the will of the people is more legitimate and more sovereign than the claims of the representatives of the divine right of the kings, and is the only source of all power, yet can he say:

"Ein grosser Demokrat sagte einst: er würde, hätte ein König ihm die Hand gedrückt, sogleich seine Hand ins Feuer halten, um sie zu reinigen. Ich möchte in derselben Weise sagen: Ich würde meine Hand waschen, wenn mich das souveräne Volk mit seinem Händedruck beehrt hätte." (2)

This is just another illustration of the contrasting and dualistic personality of Heine. In the 'Confessions' he indicates a way of redeeming some of the unpleasant features of the people which they possess through no fault of their own. The people are not beautiful because they are dirty; give them clean and beautiful environment; the people are not kind because they are hungry; give them enough food; the people are not intelligent because their education has been neglected; educate them.

(1) Reisebilder, II, Schlusswort, III - p. 397.

(2) Gedächtnisse, VII - p. 460.

The principles of democracy will become an actuality only if back of them is intelligence and informed conviction. The smoothest road to control of political conduct is by control of public opinion. Freedom of the press is of primary importance in the testing and obtaining of knowledge and in the formation of public opinion. Next to the privileged classes, it is censorship against which Heine chiefly directs the fury of his attacks. He becomes militant and waxes eloquent in the defence of the freedom of the press. Censorship had mutilated Heine's Salon and Die romantische Schule, as a result of which he was misrepresented in Germany and was accused of immorality and atheism. He vehemently protested against the legislation of the Bundestag by which his writings, past, present and future, were banned in Germany. His attacks on Menzel, the subservient agent of Metternich, who influenced the Bundestag against Heine and Das Junge Deutschland, are second only to those on Platen and on Boerne in their wrathful indignation. Most of the introductions to his works Kahldorf ueber den Adel and Ueber den Denunziaten proclaim from the housetops the absolute necessity of freedom of the press:

"Das ist ja eben der Segen der Pressfreiheit, sie raubt der kuehnen Sprache des Demagogen allen Zauber der Neuheit, das leidenschaftliche Wort neutralisiert sie durch ebenso

leidenschaftliche Gegenrede, und sie erstickt in der Geburt schon die Luegerichte, die, von Zufall oder Bosheit gesaet, so toedlich frech emporwuchern im Verborgenen, gleich jenen Giftpflanzen, die nur in dunklen Waldsuempfen und im Schatten alter Burg-und Kirchentruemmer gedeihen, im hellen Sonnenlichte aber elendlich und jaemmerlich verdorren." (1)

The German people had been shamelessly betrayed by William III and the aristocracy. They had been promised a constitutional government and gladly had given their life-blood, bearing that promised land in mind. But instead of the Magna Charta of liberty they had received a "verbriefte Knechtschaft" in the form of the legislation of the Bundestag. Like Zola, Heine hurled his condemnation at the German government in the form of his impassioned denunciation -- "Ich klage an!"

The French Revolution had demonstrated that pure fanaticism and uninformed conviction never would create the best possible government for the people. The best solution Heine had to offer was a constitutional monarchy based on democratic principles:

"Wenn auch die Koenige so toericht sind, dem Geiste des Volkes zu widerstreben, so bleibe ich doch meiner innersten Ueberzeugung nach ein Anhaenger des Koenigtums, des monarchischen Princips(2

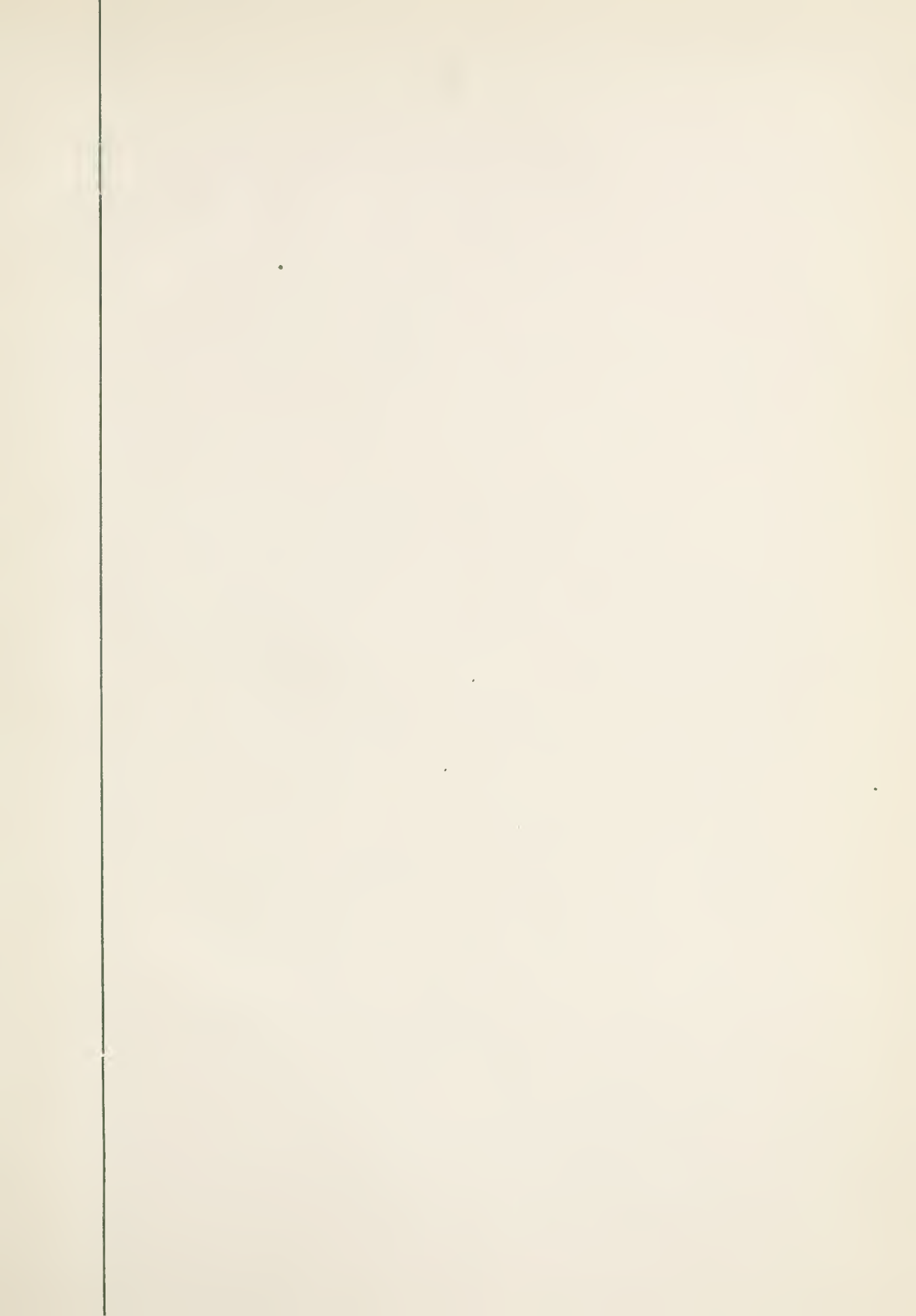
'Charakter' and 'Genie' are inseparable. Heine the

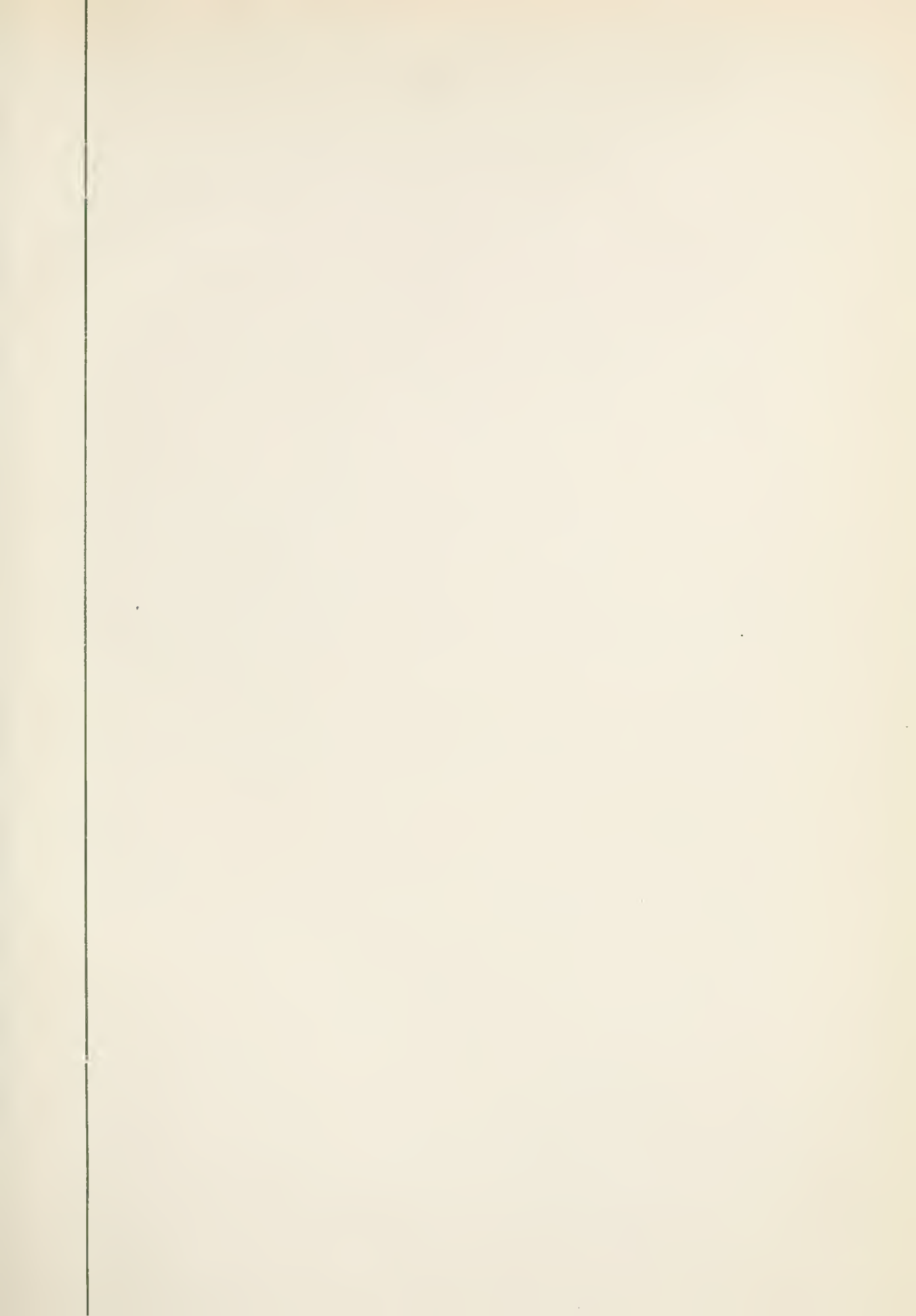
(1) Einleitung zu Kahldorf ["] über den Adel - VIII pp. 158-159.

(2) Die Stadt Lucca, III - p. 380.

man and Heine the poet are one. His life and his literary work reveal a desperately sincere protagonist of the principle of democracy. We do not sanction his ruthless savagery in the merciless treatment of his enemies, but we must admit that though he gave no quarter, neither did he ask for it. We are repelled by the bitter cynicism and satire constantly recurring in his work, yet are at the same time attracted by the loftiness of his ideals, by the intrepidity with which he faced danger, by the humour and undaunted courage with which he bore the pains and sufferings of the 'Matratzengruft', by his untiring quest after truth and beauty, by the purity of his poetic expression, by the clarity and wit of his style. He was not at all times a great man, but he was ever a great poet and a true artist whose greatest contribution to modern German literature, which owes him an eternal debt of gratitude, is the purest lyric poetry in any language. Although he was inconsistent in his political views, he was consistently true to the 'demokratisch-patriotische Tendenz'. His contributions to social reforms were considerable. His literary, social, religious, and political activities, although largely of a destructive nature, were definitely revolutionary. The great tragedy of his life was that he could not attain that unity and harmony within his

own soul, which he tried to bring to others. The greatest tribute we can bring him is this: he was a faithful soldier in the wars of the liberation of humanity. Sadly, yet reverently, we place a sword on his tomb: he was 'ein Ritter des Heiligen Geistes.







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